Student Winners Announced for "Shout Out for the Humanities" Contest!

4Humanities.org announces the student winners of its contest for creative and inspiring "shout outs" to the humanities in society. The international contest was judged by renowned leaders in education, foundations, and business.

SANTA BARBARA, CA -- June 7, 2016 -- "Why are the humanities--e.g., the study of history, literature, languages, philosophy, art history, media history, and culture--important to you? To society?" These were questions that a prize contest asked college and university students from around the world to answer in response to the recent drumbeat of pessimism about studying the humanities.

Sponsored by 4Humanities.org (a grass roots organization started in the United States, Canada, and England), the contest encouraged students to create inspiring statements, videos, art works, short stories, etc. Prizes of $1000, $700, and $300 were offered in each of the categories of undergraduate and graduate students, with submissions due March 1, 2016.

"I remember how hard it was for me in the 1970s to tell my engineer dad that I was going to be an English major," said 4Humanities.org co-leader Alan Liu (now an English professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara), who had the idea for the contest. "Today after the Great Recession, it's even harder to have such conversations. I hope young people today, no matter what career they want, will be willing to speak up to parents, employers, and politicians about why great societies also need great humanities, and why they personally value the humanities. These winning entries, and many of the others, were so moving."

Undergraduate Winners & Honorable Mentions
- *1st Prize Winner:* Undergraduate Team of The Gail Project (University of California, Santa Cruz) — "Do You Have a Passport?" (essay)
- *2nd Prize Winner:* CharLynne Cather (University Nebraska–Lincoln) — "A Letter to Future Generations" (epistolary essay)
- *3rd Prize Winner:* Sarah Boyko (University of North Florida) — "Spoons for Our Soup" (essay)
- *Honorable Mention:* Amy Bareham (University of Charlotte, North Carolina) — "Your Story and You: A Defense of Storytelling and Humanity" (essay)
- *Honorable Mention:* Amelia Poole (Colgate University, New York) — "Why I Study the Humanities, and Why Finding a Job Doesn't Scare Me" (essay)

Graduate Student Winners & Honorable Mentions
- *1st Prize Winner:* André Lynch (St. Lawrence University, New York) — "Facts of Humanities" (video, music, and lyrics)
- *2nd Prize Winner:* Floris Solleveld (Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands) — "Was There Ever Not a Crisis in the Humanities?" (essay)
- *3rd Prize Winner:* Jesper Skytte Sodemann (University of Southern Denmark, Odense)— "Verbalized Humanities: Should I stay or Should I Go?" (essay)

- *Honorable Mention:* Whitney Laycock (Weber State University, Ogden, Utah) — "Chile the Country, Not the Food" (essay)

A distinguished panel of university, business, creative industry, and foundation leaders served as judges, including:
- Rens Bod (Professor of Humanities & Computational and Digital Humanities, University of Amsterdam)
- Richard Brodhead (President, Duke University)
- Neil Griffiths (Co-founder and Director, Arts Emergency)
- Christine Henseler (Professor and Chair, Department of Spanish, Union College; *Huffington Post* contributor)
- Eileen Joy (Co-director, Punctum Books; Co-founder, Babel Working Group)
- Jenny Lawton (CEO, MakerBot)
- Earl Lewis (President, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation)
- Jonathan Schmidt-Swartz (Student; Founder and Director of StuHum, Student Advocates for the Future of the Humanities)
- Matthew Stinchcomb (Vice President for Values & Impact, Etsy, Inc.)
- Laura Skandera Trombley (President, The Huntington Library)
- Marina Zurkow (Media artist ; faculty in the Interactive Telecommunications Program, New York University)

The contest web site at *4humanities.org/contest* included submission guidelines, a "contest kit" with resources and tools for students to use, and a call for university and community leaders to host "creativity workshops" to incubate student submissions.

Over the coming weeks and months, 4Humanities will showcase and publicize the submissions of the contest winners, honorable mentions, and also many selected other submissions.

Started in 2010 by concerned scholars in several nations in the U.S., Canada, and U.K., 4Humanities.org is an international initiative whose scholars, students, and others work on advocacy for the humanities backed up by research on public perceptions and discussion of the humanities. It is backed in particular by scholars working in the "digital humanities" who feel that today's digital and networked media offer promising new ways to enhance the public understanding of the humanities and also to infuse the humanities themselves with fresh currents of thought and interest from the public.

Source:
4Humanities.org
Local chapters --
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- Union College, Schenectady, NY (and *NY6* Consortium of Liberal Arts Colleges)
- California State University, Northridge
- Auburn University
- McGill University
- DHMakerBus

Contact information:

Lead contact: Alan Liu, Professor, Department of English, UC Santa Barbara, ayliu@english.ucsb.edu